

NPDB-HIPDB DATA BANK NEWS



JANUARY 2004

Enhanced MMPR Format Debuts in February

Medical Malpractice Payment Report (MMPR) format changes will take effect next month. The changes are based primarily on recommendations from a panel of MMPR reporters and the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) Executive Committee members convened by the Center for Health Policy Studies (CHPS). The Division of Practitioner Data Banks (DPDB) contracted with CHPS to identify ways to improve the quality and accuracy of information contained in MMPR reports. MMPR reporters received a letter last September describing the format changes in detail. This was followed by an article in the October 2003 issue of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News* entitled *Previewing MMPR Format Changes*.

The most notable change to the MMPR format involves collecting mandatory information in individual fields rather than in the narrative Description of the Act(s) or Omission(s) field: the patient's age, type (inpatient/outpatient), gender and initial medical condition; the procedure performed and the outcome. These separate new fields will be mandatory, because this information is currently required to be reported in the narrative description.

The current Act/Omission code list that currently appears in the Classification of Act(s) or Omission(s) section of the MMPR *Report Input* form will be replaced with two new code lists: the

Nature of Allegation and the Specific Allegation. These two new code lists will appear in the Classification of Act(s) or Omission(s) section of the new MMPR *Report Input* form.

1. **Nature of Allegation** - This code list reflects the major category headings of the current Act/Omission code list and includes a more current, broader range of codes. Beginning in February, reporters will be required to select one allegation code from the drop-down list on the *Report Input* screen.

To preview a list of Nature of Allegation codes now, see page 4-3 of the MMPR Interface Control Document (ICD), accessible from www.npdb-hipdb.com. Under the General Information section of the home page, click **Using the ITP Interface**. Under ITP File Formats (Effective February 2, 2004), click **ICD — Medical Malpractice Payment Reports**.

2. **Specific Allegation** - This code list, too, will appear in the Classification of Act(s) or Omission(s) section of the MMPR *Report Input* form. The Specific Allegation code list incorporates codes and concepts from reporting schemes developed by the Physician Insurers' Association of America and the Risk Management Foundation of the Harvard Medical Institutions (RMF). Beginning in February, reporters

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may select up to two Specific Allegation codes from the drop-down list on the *Report Input* screen. At least one Specific Allegation code must be reported.

To preview a list of Specific Allegation codes now, see page 4-4 of the MMPR Interface Control Document (ICD), accessible from www.npdb-hipdb.com. Under ITP File Formats (Effective February 2, 2004), click **ICD —Medical Malpractice Payment Reports**.

The Payment Information section of the upcoming MMPR *Report Input* form will be divided into three subsections: Payments by This Payer for This Practitioner; Payments by

See Enhanced MMPR Format on page 6

Subject Database Improvements

Significant improvements to the subject database and import functionality will be available in April! Entities that use the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) will have expanded sort options, the ability to delete all subjects from their subject database, and will be automatically notified when attempting to store potential duplicate subjects in their subject database.

IMPORTING SUBJECTS:

Improvements will be made to the procedure for importing subjects into an existing subject database. When importing subjects, entity users must determine whether they wish to keep or remove the existing

subjects that are stored in their subject database. If the entity user decides to keep the existing subjects when importing new subjects on the *Import Subject Information* screen (Figure 1), they should select one of the following options:

- Store subjects even if subjects are duplicates.
- Ignore subjects if they appear to be duplicates.
- Display duplicate subjects from the import file.

SORT OPTIONS:

Entity users will have more choices for sorting the subjects in their

subject database. This enhanced sort functionality will be particularly helpful for entities with large numbers of stored subjects. Entities will be able to sort by **Name**, **Department**, and by subjects that have been stored as **Complete**. If you want to organize your subject database to ensure that all your records will be ready when you want to query, sort by clicking **Complete**. Any incomplete subjects will display on-screen first, followed by all complete subjects. Users will also be able to edit subjects that are stored as incomplete and correct the subject information to make them ready for querying. For more information on making a subject "complete," see the first question cited in the article *Dear Data Banks*, on page 3 of this newsletter.

"DELETE ALL" CAPABILITY:

The **Delete All** option allows an entity user to delete all subjects from their subject database. This option is available on the *Import Subject Information* screen, as well as the *Maintain Individual (or Organization) Subject* screen.

• Importing Subject Information:

Entities that use third party credentialing software may find it useful to use the **Delete All** function to remove the subjects currently in the subject database before using the *Import Subject Information* screen to import new subjects. After deleting all subjects in the subject database, an entity user can import subjects with the third-party software, and then query on all of the subjects in the subject database.

- **Maintain Individual (or Organization) Subject:** When users choose to edit or delete subjects on the *Maintain Individual*

Figure 1. On the *Import Subject Information* screen, entity users can determine whether they wish to keep or remove the existing subjects that are stored in their subject database.

(or Organization) Subject screen, they will be able to delete all subjects that appear in the box on-screen. Multiple subjects that are no longer needed by the user can be deleted all at once, saving the entity the time of having to delete entries individually.

Please use caution when using the new Delete All function: Once deleted, subjects are removed from the IQRS subject database and cannot be restored.

POTENTIAL DUPLICATE SUBJECTS

When adding subjects to a subject database on the *Maintain Individual (or Organization) Subject* screen (by submitting and saving a query or report subject or by importing subjects on the *Import Subject Information* screen), there is the possibility that the subject being stored already exists in the subject database. When the IQRS detects a potential duplicate subject, based on identifying information pertaining to last name, first name, and Social Security Number (if applicable), the *Potential Duplicate Subject(s)* screen appears. At that point, entity users will have three options:

- Click on **View Subject** to view information on the subject already stored in the database to determine whether or not to store the new subject.
- Store the new subject (even though the subject in question might be a duplicate).
- Decide not to store the new subject.

Please note that the Data Banks are not responsible for duplicate charges incurred due to duplicate queries submitted. Users remain responsible for identification of duplicate subjects prior to submitting queries. ¶

Dear Data Banks...

This new section of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News* will answer questions submitted by Data Bank users. If you have a question that you would like to see included in our next newsletter, please contact Dear Data Banks, P.O. Box 10832, Chantilly VA 20153-0832 or e-mail your question to Dear Data Banks at npdb-hipdb@sra.com. Questions that require immediate answers should be directed to the Customer Service Center (phone: 1-800-767-6732 or e-mail: npdb-hipdb@sra.com). We look forward to hearing from you!

Question: I have subjects that I know are stored in my entity's subject database, but when I try to query from my available subjects, they do not show up. Why does this happen?

Answer: If you stored a subject profile in your entity's subject database but neglected to complete all of the required fields, the database will store the subject profile, but the letter "N" (for No) will display in the "Complete" column. If the subject profile contains all the mandatory fields, a "Y" (for Yes) will be displayed in the "Complete" column. All "N" (that is, incomplete) subject profiles will be stored in the subject database, but will not be available for querying until the entry is valid and complete.

To correct an incomplete subject record, select a subject with an "N" under the "Complete" column. Select **Edit** from the *Maintain Individual (or Organization) Subject* screen and scroll down to the bottom of the form. Select **Validate Without Storing**. This will prompt you to correct any incomplete fields

for the subject. After correcting the information, click **Validate Without Storing** again until you get a message that reads "Subject information is valid and complete." Then click **Store** to complete the entry.

Question: I was prompted to change my password, and now I am locked out. What happened?

Answer: You could be locked out for one of several reasons. When prompted to change your password (you are required to change your password every 180 days), you are not allowed to reuse the last four passwords. You may also find yourself locked out if you forget to click **Save** after choosing your new password. Once you enter your old password, you must enter your new password twice, and then click **Save** to save it. You will then be prompted to log off and log back in to the IQRS using the new password. If you are locked out, call the Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732 for assistance.

Question: I submitted my query a month ago, but the query results are no longer available. Can you fax me a printed copy of the query results?

Answer: Your entity's query results are available for viewing and printing for 30 days. After the 30 days, the results are purged. To receive a printed result, you must submit a new query. If you would like to view your query results after 30 days, we recommend that you open the response file before the 30-day deadline and save a copy to your hard drive to review at your convenience. ¶

Coming in April: User Account Enhancements

STAY IN THE LOOP - OPT TO RECEIVE DATA BANK NEWS!

All users will soon be able to subscribe on-line to receive paper copies of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*. To subscribe (if you are not currently receiving the newsletter), select the box on the *User Account Information* screen (Figure 2). *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News* promises to give your entity up-to-date information on current IQRS functionality and upcoming improvements.

Effective April 1, 2004, if you are not already receiving the newsletter via mail and would like to, log in to the IQRS, click **Continue** on the *Entity*

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Figure 2. Beginning in April, entity users can subscribe on-line to *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News* at the *User Account Information* screen.

Helpful Hints From

IMPROVE YOUR IQRS SUBJECT DATABASE

Duplicate subject entries can clutter your subject database and may cause you to perform more than one query on the same subject. If you have subject names stored in your entity's database multiple times, follow these simple steps. To edit your subject database, click **Maintain Subject Database** on the *Options* menu, and click **Edit or Delete Individual Subjects** on the *Subject Maintenance Type* screen. Open the subject information to verify that it is a duplicate. If the subject is indeed a duplicate, you may delete the entry by selecting the subject to be deleted and clicking **Delete**. For more information about future subject database improvements concerning duplicate subjects, see the article on page 2 of this newsletter.

REJECTED QUERY RESPONSE?

When you receive a rejected query result, click on the DCN link on the *Query Status* screen to view the reason

for rejection. Common reasons include invalid credit card number or expiration date and/or incomplete subject data. If your query was rejected for a credit card reason, scroll down to the second page to view the reason. Make the appropriate correction and resubmit the query to obtain a complete query response. Your entity's administrator can store credit card information in the IQRS so that users will not have to enter the card information each time they submit a query. The entity's administrator will need to ensure that the credit card information is entered and stored correctly. For more information on storing credit card information in the IQRS, see the credit card hint below.

ENTITY ADMINISTRATORS CAN STORE MULTIPLE CREDIT CARDS

Since November 2003, entity administrators have been able to store multiple credit cards in the IQRS for query payments, and assign entity users to a specific

Registration Confirmation screen, click **Update User Account** on the *Options* screen, and check the appropriate box on the *User Account Information* screen to request your newsletter subscription (also be sure to complete the Name and Street Address fields), and click **Save**.

If you would like to start your subscription before April, please send your name and mailing information to the Customer Service Center via e-mail (npdb-hipdb@sra.com) or phone us at 1-800-767-6732. As always, copies of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News* can be found on-line at www.npdb-hipdb.com. Under Publications, click **Newsletters**. At that site, you may view archived issues as well as the latest edition of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*.

SAVE TIME WITH THE PRE-POPULATED CERTIFICATION FEATURE

A time-saving addition to the IQRS, also scheduled for implementation in April, is the pre-populated certification feature. To take advantage of this feature, users should complete the Name, Title, and Telephone fields on the *User Account Information* screen. To access the *User Account Information* screen, log in to the IQRS, click **Continue** on the *Entity Registration Confirmation* screen, and click **Update User Account** on the *Options* screen. If you maintain current information on the *User Account Information* screen, you will not need to enter the certification information when submitting a query or report. You will only need to verify

this information. If you wish to change the pre-populated certification information that appears on the query or report input screen, you may do so. Please note that updating pre-populated certification information on the query or report input screen will not update the information stored on the *User Account Information* screen. Make any permanent changes to the pre-populated certification section of the *User Account Information* screen, because certification information pre-populates from this screen. The pre-populated certification feature is not available to entity administrators. ♣

The Data Banks

stored credit card. This storage feature eliminates the need for the user to type in the credit card information each time a query is performed. In addition, entity administrators can edit or remove users from assignments to specific credit cards. For security reasons, only the last four digits of the credit card number will display for the user to see when performing a query. Entity Administrators: Don't forget to update your credit card's expiration date!

AMERICAN EXPRESS IS NOW AN ACCEPTED FORM OF PAYMENT

In response to popular demand, the Data Banks now accept American Express as a form of payment for querying and self-querying. We continue to accept VISA, MasterCard and Discover. You can enter your American Express credit card information on the *Select a Payment Method* screen.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT SUFFIXES

Reporters and queriers should be sure to enter subject name suffixes (e.g., Jr., Sr., III) in the designated Suffix field (not the Last Name field) on the *Report Input* and *Query Input* screens. Placing suffixes in the Last Name field can produce inaccurate query responses.

AVOID SYSTEM PROBLEMS – UPDATE YOUR BROWSER VERSION

When using the IQRS, users periodically need to update their browser software. Supported browser versions are listed at the bottom of the Data Bank home page located at www.npdb-hipdb.com. Currently, the IQRS supports Netscape Communicator 7.0, 7.01, or 7.02 and Internet Explorer 5.5 sp2, 6.0, or 6.0 sp1. Users may select the appropriate link at the bottom of the home page and follow the instructions to upgrade their browser. ♣

NPDB Executive Committee Meeting Summary

The NPDB Executive Committee met on September 23, 2003, in Arlington, Virginia. The Committee is composed of representatives of major NPDB constituencies, including hospitals and other health care entities, State medical and dental licensing boards, professional societies, and medical malpractice payers. Accreditation organizations, practitioner groups, citizen advocacy groups, and Federal agencies were also represented. The Administrator, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), took part in the meeting.

The Executive Committee was created in order to provide valuable input to the NPDB contractor, SRA International, Inc. (SRA), regarding relevant Data Bank issues. The Committee Chair is Ms. Jodi Schirling, National Association Medical Staff Services (NAMSS) and Manager, Corporate Credentialing, Nemours Foundation. The Vice-Chair is Dr. Norman Odyniec, American College of Surgeons. Highlights of the meeting included:

- The Division of Practitioner Data Banks (DPDB) and SRA delivered status reports on NPDB operations.
- DPDB staff shared Secretarial Review case studies and discussed the possible outcomes of Secretarial Review. DPDB explained that Secretarial Review is the method used for reviewing disputed reports when the subject of the report and the reporting entity are unable to resolve the dispute after 30 days. At the subject's request, a DPDB Disputes Resolution Manager reviews the report dispute documentation, obtains additional information if necessary, and makes a decision on behalf of the Secretary. If a report is voided by the Secretary,

the subject, the reporting entity, and all queriers who received the report within the last three years are notified that the report has been removed from the Data Bank(s). Future queriers will not receive a copy of the voided report. If the decision is to maintain the report in the Data Bank(s), the Secretary inserts a statement of findings into the report. The subject, the reporting entity, and all queriers who received the report within the last three years are sent a new copy of the report including the Secretary's statement. Future queriers also receive the report with the Secretary's statement.

- DPDB gave a demonstration on how report subjects may use the on-line Report Response Service (available from the NPDB-HIPDB web site) to add a statement, place a report in dispute, or elevate a disputed report to Secretarial Review status.

The Committee discussed the draft study on reporting residents to the NPDB -- the product of a workgroup convened by the Committee in June 2001. The Executive Committee suggested further revisions and that each representative have its organization review the draft paper, revise it as needed, and take steps within their own organizations to endorse it or implement aspects of the report's recommendations.

Other agenda items included a review of the credentialing process and the implementation of recommendations from a recent Feasibility Study for Assessing Compliance with the NPDB. The NPDB Executive Committee will meet next on Tuesday, May 11, 2004, in Arlington, Virginia. ¶

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This Payer for Other Practitioners in This Case; and Payments by Others for This Practitioner. The last two subsections enable reporters to identify related payments when known (payments made for other practitioners in the same case and payments made by other payers), rather than grouping all information into a single payment field as is sometimes done in the current MMPR format. Please note that payers must continue to file a separate NPDB report for each practitioner for whose benefit a malpractice payment has been made.

The updated format will also offer several new selections in the Relationship of Entity to This Practitioner field. In addition to the CHPS panel recommendations, several minor changes have been made to the MMPR format for consistency with other Data Bank reporting formats. For

example, the MMPR will permit reporters to submit up to five other names (or aliases) used by the practitioner. Also, reporters that select Field of Licensure code 699 (Other Health Care Practitioner - Not Classified) will be required to specify the type of practitioner being reported.

These enhancements to the MMPR *Report Input* form should not require the reporter to collect additional information. Instead, the new fields reflect a new method for reporting currently required information and allow reporting of additional details. If you are an MMPR reporter and did not receive the September letter describing the MMPR format changes or if you have any questions about these upcoming changes, please contact the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732. ¶

User Review Panel Meeting

The IQRS User Review Panel (URP) met on Tuesday, September 30, 2003, in San Antonio, Texas. IQRS URP is a forum where users of the NPDB-HIPDB can gather to openly discuss their ideas about past, present, and future IQRS and Data Bank operations.

A variety of entities representing queriers and reporters attended the meeting. The agenda included an overview of recent system improvements, such as:

- On-line entity registration, authorized agent designation, and Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) authorization.
- The ability to establish a point-of-contact for queriers to contact regarding reports.
- Expanded Data Bank Correspondence capabilities.
- An electronic Report Response Service for report subjects to submit subject statements, disputes, request Secretarial Review, and update their mailing address on-line.
- An entity's ability to save new subjects into a subject database at the time of submitting a new report or query, rather than first entering the subject information in the subject database and then submitting the report or query.
- The ability to save credit card information in the IQRS for query payment.
- An entity's ability to save multiple credit card information in the IQRS and to assign Data Bank users

to specific credit cards for query payments.

- When a Subject Notification Document (SND) is returned to the Data Banks by the Post Office, the Data Banks modify the practitioner's profile by adding a note indicating that "The Data Banks attempted to notify the Subject identified in Section B on (date) at the address below, but the attempt was unsuccessful." Along with the note, the Data Banks include the mailing address that was current at the time that the SND was attempted to be delivered. This information allows the querier to determine if the subject received a copy of the report from the Data Banks.

Many of the recent system enhancements listed here are the outcome of valuable IQRS URP feedback that the Data Banks continue to solicit.

Recommendations made at past IQRS URP meetings that will soon become features of the IQRS include:

- A new report data field on the *Report Input* screen that entities can use to post an internal file or claim number (coming in February).
- Duplicate subject database entries will be flagged on a new *Potential Duplicate Subject(s)* screen, so that entity users can delete or correct them (coming in April; for more information, see the article, *Subject Database Improvements*, on page 2).

Thanks to all who participated in this year's IQRS URP meeting. The next IQRS URP meeting is tentatively scheduled for fall 2004. ♣

NPDB Customer Satisfaction Survey Results: Coming Soon

A survey on the IQRS' ease of use and the value of NPDB information was conducted through a link on the NPDB-HIPDB web site (www.npdb-hipdb.com). The survey, which was initiated to measure customer satisfaction and willingness to report to and query the NPDB, is part of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ASCI), a uniform, cross-industry survey of private and public sector customer satisfaction.

An analysis of the survey results is currently underway. To all of you who participated, we thank you for your response! Look for a summary of the survey results in an upcoming issue of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*. ♣

What Do You Think of Our New Look?

With the new year, *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News* has adopted a new look with revisions to our cover page and layout. We are interested to hear what you think of our new appearance. Please send us an e-mail at npdb-hipdb@sra.com, or give us a call at 1-800-767-6732, with your comments. We appreciate your feedback! ♣

On the Horizon

FOR ITP USERS: ENHANCED FILE FORMATS COMING IN FEBRUARY

Next month, the NPDB-HIPDB will implement several changes to the Interface Control Document Transfer Program (ITP) submission and response file formats. To prepare for the upcoming changes, ITP users should view the updated Interface Control Documents (ICDs), available on the NPDB-HIPDB web site, at www.npdb-hipdb.com. For information on detailed ITP changes, ITP users can also refer to the article entitled *Upcoming ITP Modifications*, on page 5 of the October 2003 issue of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*. If you have any questions concerning these ITP changes, please contact the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732. ¶

NAMSS Conference Highlights

"Deep in the Heart of NAMSS" was the theme for the 27th annual National Association Medical Staff Services (NAMSS) conference, held in San Antonio, Texas, on October 1-3, 2003. The conference featured prominent speakers, educational workshops, networking with peers, and an exhibition hall with displays by key industry vendors.

The NPDB-HIPDB presented a focus session on Thursday, October 2, entitled "NPDB-HIPDB: The Basics and Beyond." The session provided guidance on navigating the Data Banks to help users make more informed hiring, paneling, and credentialing decisions. The NPDB-HIPDB also participated in the exhibition with a display booth. ¶

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Health Resources & Services Administration
Division of Practitioner Data Banks
7519 Standish Place, Suite 300
Rockville, MD 20857

BULK RATE
POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
HRSA
PERMIT No. G-286